

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**The Status of the Claims**

1-35. (Previously Cancelled)

36. (Currently Cancelled).

37. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for ~~determining a price to offer~~ electronically contracting with a farmer to grow a crop of interest comprising:

a database containing current market price data for crops which are different from the crop of interest;

a profit estimator in communication with the database for estimating a profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

a product selector cooperating with the profit estimator to select a crop from the at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

a production estimator cooperating with the product selector for estimating a quantity of the crop of interest to be produced by a farmer on acreage associated with the crop selected by the product selector; ~~and~~

a pricing engine cooperating with the production estimator to develop a price to be offered the farmer of interest to grow the quantity of the crop of interest estimated by the production estimator based at least in part on the profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing the crop selected by the product selector; and

a farm selector to electronically contract with the farmer of interest to grow the quantity of the crop of interest at the price developed by the pricing engine.

38. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to ~~determine a price to offer~~ a contract to a farmer to grow a crop of interest by performing at least the following:

accessing a database containing current market price data for crops which are different from the crop of interest;

estimating a profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

selecting a crop from the at least one of the crops which are different from the crop of interest;

estimating a quantity of the crop of interest to be produced by a farmer on acreage associated with the selected crop; ~~and~~

developing a price to be offered the farmer of interest to grow the estimated quantity of the crop of interest based at least in part on the profit that the farmer can expect to earn by growing the selected crop which is different than the crop of interest; and

offering a contract to the farmer of interest to grow the quantity of the crop of interest at the developed price.

39. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture as defined in claim 38 wherein developing a price further comprises:

identifying a risk factor associated with the farmer of interest; and

adjusting the price to be offered the farmer of interest to grow the quantity of the crop of interest based at least in part upon the risk factor.

40. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to develop economic information relating to activities of farms by performing at least the following:

identifying farms capable of growing a crop of interest;

electronically accessing at least one on-line market to ascertain at least one current market price for at least one product different than a crop of interest;

determining projected profits to the identified farms for growing at least one product different than the crop of interest based at least partially upon the at least one current market price;

selecting at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest on at least some of the identified farms based at least in part upon the projected profits;

estimating an economic effect that substituting the crop of interest for the at least one of the products will have on at least one of: (a) ~~a transportation market;~~ (b) ~~a commodity market;~~ (c) demand for storage space; (d) (b) land usage; (e) ~~a price of at least one of the at least one of the products;~~ (f) ~~supply of at least one product;~~ (g) and, (c) demand for at least one input to a farm;-.

41. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture as defined in claim 40 further comprising taking market action based upon the estimated economic effect.

42. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture as defined in claim 40 wherein the commodity market is associated with at least one of the at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest.

43. (Previously Withdrawn) A method for securing a resource for growing crops comprising the steps of:

developing a set of farms capable of growing a crop of interest;

estimating profits to be earned by farms in the set of farms for growing at least one crop which is different from the crop of interest;

analyzing at least one of the estimated profits and estimated yields of the farms to identify an undervalued resource; and

taking market action to secure the identified undervalued resource.

44. (Previously Withdrawn) A method as defined in claim 43 wherein the undervalued resource comprises at least one of land and storage space.

45. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to reduce risk associated with contracting to grow a crop of interest by performing at least the following:

identifying farms capable of growing a crop of interest;

electronically accessing at least one on-line market to ascertain at least one current market price for at least one product different than a crop of interest;

determining projected profits to each of the identified farms for growing products different than the crop of interest based at least partially upon the at least one current market price;

selecting at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest on at least some of the identified farms based at least in part upon the projected profits; and

selecting a subset of the identified farms to receive a contractual offer to grow the crop of interest based on the profit that the identified farms can expect to earn by growing the crop which is replaced by the crop of interest and upon at least one risk associated with the geographic location of the identified farms.

46. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture as defined in claim 45 wherein the at least one risk comprises at least one of weather risk and logistics risk.

47. (Previously Withdrawn) A method for managing inventory relating to growing a crop of interest to an agricultural entity comprising the steps of:

identifying farms capable of growing the crop of interest;

selecting farms from the identified farms to grow the crop of interest;

contracting with at least some of the selected farms to grow the crop of interest; and

managing the inventory based at least in part on contractual commitments made by the selected farms.

48. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture as defined in claim 41 wherein the market action is taken by at least one of an electronic buying agent and an electronic selling agent.

49-50. (Previously Cancelled)

51. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture storing machine readable instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the

machine to estimate an effect growing a crop of interest will have on a region of interest by performing at least the following:

identifying farms in the region of interest which are capable of growing the crop of interest;

determining a first set of aggregated projected inputs and outputs of the farms in the region of interest for growing products different than the crop of interest;

selecting at least one of the products to be replaced by the crop of interest on at least some of the farms in the region of interest;

determining a second set of aggregated projected inputs and outputs of farms in the region of interest assuming the at least some of the farms replace the at least one of the products with the crop of interest; and

computing a difference between the first and second sets of aggregated inputs and outputs to estimate at least one effect growing the crop of interest will have on the region of interest.